



# Connection Group Participant Guide

October 31, 2021

Malachi 3:1-7

**Teaching Point 1.** He is like a refiner's fire – Though being refined by fire would not be comfortable, they should take this promise as a comfort. God did not abandon them. When they rejected Him, He didn't reject them. Instead, He keeps working with them. He uses events and persecution to refine them until their hearts return to Him once again. Throughout this process He shows His patience, compassion, and grace. After all, He had made a covenant with them. Even though they didn't fulfill their part of it, He would still fulfill His part. When they are faithless, He remained faithful.

**Application:** One application from this passage can be applied to marriage, which is also a covenant relationship, and spoken of in the previous verses. Even if our spouse is not faithful to the promises they have made, we should continue to be faithful. We should not use their faithlessness to go back on our word. Instead, we should be patient, merciful, and gracious to do everything we can to restore the relationship.

**Teaching Point 2.** I do not change – Here is the reason that God did not reject them. He had made a covenant with them. He had chosen them as His special people. This choice was made when they didn't deserve it. It was made with full knowledge that they were sinners and that they would rebel against Him many times. He made this choice by the act of His own will. Because this choice did not originally depend on them, their behavior would not change His mind. God's character is unchangeable, and His love is unconditional. He will fulfill His promises.

**Application:** This is the same reason that believers who have received salvation have eternal security. God chose to save us in spite of our sin even when we did not deserve it (Romans 5:8). He knew who we were and still offered His grace and forgiveness. Even if after believing in Christ you stumble and fall into sin, God will not cast you out because He doesn't change. His word doesn't fail. His promises are sure (John 10:27-30).

Verse 7 – For much of Israel's history they did not have a good relationship with God. Far from God, they were often recipients of His discipline. But here we see that this was not God's choice. He did not leave them. It was they who left Him. We see God's grace, patience, and faithfulness. He is like the prodigal son's father, always waiting to joyfully welcome His son to return again.

*2 Timothy 2:13 - If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*